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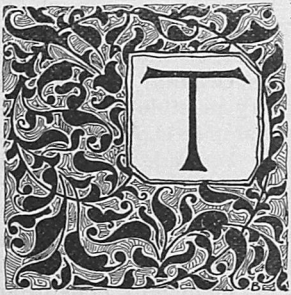
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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

DECORATIVE ART.



THE six decorative compositions, on pages 62, 63 and 64, by François Ehrmann, represent the decorative arts of sculpture, architecture, painting, ceramic art, and goldsmith's work. These representations of the above arts are fine examples of decorative art, for when art symbolizes art, we have the truest form of decoration.

There exists in the minds of people in general considerable confusion as to the exact meanings of the terms "Art" and "Decorative Art." Art, pure and simple, is a sentiment to which every man is more or less sensitive. The sentiment exists in some in a latent state, and in others it is manifested by a keen admiration awakened by the sight of a beautiful work of nature, or some beautiful creation by the hands of man. In other people, again, the artistic sentiment is so strong as to cause them to create a work that will convey to others the imagination and emotion that they themselves entertained while creating it.

tion of the world. It is a matter of regret, in our age, that esotericism should distinguish between "*un grand art, et un petit art.*" Decorative art is in no sense a degradation of art. It is the ennobling of the object without the degradation of the sentiment. In fact, all art, all works of art, all artistic productions, are the work of decorative art without whose limits art does not exist, all art being the enjoyment of luxury, therefore everything that is produced that is not simply useful or necessary is an ornamental article. If the decorator can invest the article he works at with the highest form of beauty, he is just as much an artist as he who paints a picture, models a statue, or designs a building.

Writers on decorative art have sought to make a distinction between the terms "Decoration" and "Ornament." It is amusing to watch the efforts of these gentlemen contradicting each other in their endeavors to produce a distinction without a difference.

One writer states that a design which is wholly contained within the decorated space, as seen most frequently in the work of English decorators, is *ornament*, while decoration in the Japanese style, which introduces plant and animal effects that start from behind the border of the panel, without paying any attention to its boundaries as the limits within which the work



FIG. 3.—THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION.

These last are veritable artists, for they not only are able to comprehend, but they also possess the faculty to produce, works of art.

Art, therefore, is a sentiment possessing at once a science or theory, and the instinct which makes it possible to interpret nature, either by means of distinct ideas, or ideas more or less conformable to the effects of nature.

Art is the product of sentiment and imagination, guided by technical skill in conformity with the laws of beauty. Industrial art, that is to say the application of art to industry, has given rise to the phrase "Decorative Art." Every time an exhibition is held in Paris, the following phrase is usually included in the printed programme: "*Exposer les conditions de l'alliance qui doit exister entre les arts et l'industrie; déterminer les points de contact qui les rapprochent, les limites qui les separent. Conclure en indiquant, parmi les diverses institutions utiles, celles qui servaient à modifier ou à créer dans l'intérêt du perfectionnement des œuvres de l'art et des produits de l'industrie.*"

In fact, as soon as an artist creates an object of use, that instant he has created a work of art. Even the least important vase, salt cellar, wall or tile pavement, is ennobled by the application of art, and the artisan who can do this work is a veritable artist. The artists of ancient Greece and Rome were at the same time artists and artisans, and the most humble of their vases, as well as the most elegant, were executed by the same man, and their marvellous models have been the admira-

should be wholly contained, is only *decoration*; thus calling what he considers illegitimate decorative art by the name of ornament.

Another writer distinguishes between these phrases by stating that decoration is the *intentional* addition of beauty to any object as opposed to ornament which is mere *unintentional* beauty. If the object be beautiful by accident of form or color it is simply ornamental. Decoration, he holds, is much higher than ornament, because it implies reasoning. The more closely it resembles nature and becomes pictorial, it loses decorative meaning, for its most potent force is to supply a beauty beyond nature.

The truth is, there is no difference between ornament and decoration, the words being synonymous. There is quite as much decoration in the Japanese method of filling a panel, as there is in the English method, and the pictorial representation of nature is quite as legitimately decorative work as the ultra-conventionalism of a Moorish, or Celtic, arabesque.

For the sake of simplicity, however, decoration, which is the most modern and most comprehensive term, is sufficient for our purpose. We equally admire the decoration of the English artist who, governed by the European system, will arrange his plant motive, including root, branch, leaf and flower, wholly within the limits of his panel, and at the same time the decoration of the Japanese artist, who introduces his decorative effects

wholly without warning, the larger part of the tree or branch being usually left out of sight. The design of the Japanese artist is quite as intentional as the European artist's. Both are conventional designs, for no matter how closely the flower produced by the Japanese brush resembles nature, we know from the evidence presented us that the ornament belongs to the Japanese style.

Decorative art seeks to express, as it were, the symbol, or soul of the object, by means of the typical, rather than the actual form.

Decoration having to deal almost entirely with geometrical proportions, with length, breadth and height, as in buildings and furniture; with flat or rounded surfaces, as in pottery, with dimensions and limits of all kinds, must necessarily per-take to a large extent of the shapes, proportions and qualities of the surfaces to which it is applied.

To accommodate the forms of nature to such artificial forms and dimensions, requires the simplest forms, very elastic in outline, that will accommodate themselves to every exigency of habitat.

WOOD STAINING.



FANCY a veneer of birdseye maple in a pale flesh color, or camellia red, or a piece of finely grained oak in Scobeloff green, heliotrope, or pale beige color, and you will have some idea of a process that certainly adds to the attractiveness of the wood, which may be polished, revealing all the beauty of the natural graining in a color beyond the power of nature to produce. Truly the art of staining woods in various colors has nowadays reached great perfection.

Messrs. Auffermann & Co., proprietors of "The American Wood Staining Works," located at 158 West 27th Street, New York, stain their woods by a process known as the "Système Auffermann," which is in high favor in Europe. By this method of staining veneers, the boards are colored not merely to a shallow depth, but are stained through their entire body. The dye penetrates the pores of the wood, which retains all its specific markings, together with the brilliancy of color which has been imparted to it.

Fancy woods and veneers are in great demand in modern cabinet making, and anything that will not only render the work done more beautiful, but will also lessen the time necessary to finish it, must recommend itself to the manufacturers of fine furniture. The piano manufacturers in particular will be greatly interested in such an enterprise, because of the facility with which veneer stained a deep jet black, or other color can be procured,

The Aufferman ebony stain produces a rich jet black color without spots, or streaks of false glimmer, which not only improves the appearance of the piano, but reduces the cost by reason of the time and labor saved. In their veneers another advantage consists in the fact that the mouldings, consoles, ornaments, etc., are all identical in appearance and effect, with the case proper.

In the case of colored and figured woods, beautiful imitations of oak, cherry, mahogany, cedar and other fancy woods are produced at a very low price and are surprisingly true to nature.

Very beautiful mosaic patterns are wrought in stained woods for the tops of occasional tables and for chess boards, in which extremely beautiful patterns are produced. Different strips of variously colored woods when glued together, side by side, are afterwards cut according to the exigencies of various patterns for marquetry inlays and borders for jewelery boxes, music boxes, writing cases, toilet cases, decorative panels, etc.

The manufacturers of wood carpets have been endeavoring for some time past to produce parquetry floors that would rival the beauty of design and color which is loudly praised in Oriental carpets, but the difficulty that has hitherto prevented them from consummating the idea, is the fact that natural woods are extremely limited in their variety of color tints, and that it

would be impossible to produce designs with all the wealth of dull reds, greens, browns, blues and yellows that form the attraction in wool fabrics. Now, however, this difficulty is removed at a single stroke. Wood veneers for parquetry purposes are produced in every known shade of color, so the manufacturer has only to go to work and produce his Oriental designs, being sure that he can execute them in every possible tone of color known to Oriental rugs. This is a great step in the development of wood carpets, and one that is sure to be made use of by interior remodelers, who include wood carpeting as a portion of their business:

We have all of us seen parquetry floors in cherry reds, oak browns, mahogany reds and maple yellows; it is now possible for us to see the maple, oak, cherry, or mahogany floor in any tone of color, as well as in the natural tint, an idea made possible by the Auffermann system of staining woods.

In the sample card before us, strips of white wood and bird's-eye maple are stained French gray, Scobeloff green, purple, pink, camellia red, blondine, tobacco brown, old rose, coquelicot, Bresil red, ble-d'or, toreador, Australian gold, vieille paille, autumn brown, magnolia green, marine blue, and Persian heliotrope. In like manner oak and various white woods have been similarly stained, so that cabinet makers, piano makers, and manufacturers of wood carpets, as well as remodelers of ceilings and walls, have no longer any excuse for not being able to produce their work in any known shade of wood paneling, which at the same time exhibits all the graining of the natural wood and is susceptible of a brilliant polish.

PURCHASING wall-paper at one establishment, carpets at another, curtains somewhere else and furniture upholstery in another place, each article being purchased as it strikes the fancy of the buyer, frequently produces a perfectly meaningless result when the work of furnishing is done.

A decorator informs us that he uses a size for gold leaf which if properly made has no equal whether the gilding be done on wood, glass or metal. He claims it to be the "secret size" used by the best artists of London and Paris, and by the justly celebrated Japanese of London who produce the finest work in gold decoration in their line to be found in the world's market. The formula is as follows: Take one pound of good pure drying oil; put it in a metal pot with a cover; slowly add to this, after it has come almost to a boiling point, four ounces of pure powdered gum animi, (not copal which is sometimes confounded with it.) Take the animi on the point of a pallet knife and put it in cautiously little by little, allowing each supply time to dissolve, all the while stirring the mixture. Boil to the consistency of tar, and while warm, strain through a piece of silk into a heated wide-mouthed bottle, keep well corked, and when required, thin with turpentine and mix thoroughly. If a little vermilion is ground with the size it will show better what is being done in using it.

THERE are lost art secrets many of which would prove valuable if recovered and some of which are the constant subject of research in this and other countries. Among individuals thus engaged are the Japanese potters who are still in search of the means of compounding the *sang de bœuf*, the dragons heart, and that ancient and wonderful Chinese black which has green and gold in its gloom. Their labors in this direction have not been without reward, for they have brought to light the means of producing the beautiful blue under the glaze of the celebrated Satsuma ware. The Chinese have lost the secret of the superb blue that once decorated their table ware and vases; and so with other tones of color. England, France and Germany discoverers of decorative materials and new processes, environed these with so much secrecy in their life time that the art of which they were the exclusive possessors died with them. Within the past ten years not a few of the arts of the secrets of the old Venetian glass makers have been brought to light, but the method by which these gave unrivalled lightness to their crystal wares so far defies discovery. All that our table glass requires is greater lightness, but the quantity of lead necessary to secure its present luster and brilliancy defeats this purpose. While some re-discoveries have been arrived at by persistent experiments, others have been made by accident. It is not, however, every lost art that would commercially pay, or if brought to light would prove of present value.